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PRESS Release

For Immediate Release

Topic: County Health Departments Statewide Get Flu Vaccine

Date: December 1, 2000

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Health department clinics statewide will have flu vaccine available beginning Monday, December 4, at 8 a.m.

The Mississippi State Department of Health has received an additional 62,000 doses of vaccine. The Department has now gotten about 90,000 of the 130,000 doses ordered.

State Health Officer Dr. Ed Thompson said this quantity should be sufficient to afford flu protection to all who want to get their shots at the Health Department.

“We continue to urge people at high risk — the elderly, chronically ill, and health care workers who care for them — to get vaccinated now,” said Dr. Thompson. “We can offer vaccine to anyone else as well, but we do ask people not at high risk to wait about a week to allow the high risk folks to get theirs first.”

Mississippi’s flu season does not usually begin until mid-December or early January.

Like all states, Mississippi has had to deal with a nationwide delay of the influenza vaccine. In June, flu vaccine manufacturers told federal public health officials to expect delays in flu vaccine shipments. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has guaranteed the production of up to nine million doses of additional flu vaccine to make up for possible shortfalls experienced by some of the vaccine manufacturers.

Health officials stressed that a shortage of vaccine is not expected, only a delay.

Persons who are at highest risk for influenza complications include

- < anyone 65 years and older
- < residents and personnel of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities that house people of any age who have chronic medical conditions
- < adults and children who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary cardiovascular systems, including asthma
- < adults and children who have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the past year because of chronic metabolic disease (including diabetes mellitus), kidney dysfunction, blood disorders, or immunosuppression
- < children and teenagers – aged six months to 18 years – who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and therefore might be at risk for developing Reye syndrome after influenza infection
- < women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season
- < physicians, nurses, and other personnel in both hospital and outpatient-care settings, including emergency response workers
- < persons who provide home care to persons in high-risk groups
- < household members (including children) of persons in high-risk groups.

More information about influenza disease and the vaccine is on the CDC Web site, www.cdc.gov. Residents with questions may call their local county health department.